

THE CEA CRITIC

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Paperbound Previews

The following titles making their first paperbound — and sometimes first — appearance will be published between February and May. Some may interest you for summer or fall adoption or for your personal reading.

From time to time we are asked, "Why doesn't some paperbound publisher revive —?" If you have a favorite title of fiction, poetry, criticism, or whatever, not available in paperback, that you think should find a publisher, send your suggestions to the compilers of this column, c/o *The CEA Critic*, and we'll try to start the wheels moving.

Adams, Henry. *Democracy*: New American Library Signet Classic.

Adler, Mortimer. *Great Ideas from the Books*: Washington Square Press.

Baker, Carlos (ed.). *Hemingway and His Critics*: Hill and Wang.

Baldanza, Frank. *Mark Twain*: Barnes & Noble.

Barzun, Jacques. *Classic, Romantic and Modern*: Doubleday Anchor.

Bate, Walter Jackson. *The Achievement of Samuel Johnson*: Oxford Galaxy Book. — *From Classic to Romantic*: Harper Torchbook.

Beckson, Karl, and Arthur Ganz. *Reader's Guide to Literary Terms*: Noonday.

Bennett, Mildred R. *The World of Willa Cather*: Univ. of Nebraska Bison Book.

Bowra, C. M. *The Romantic Imagination*: Oxford Galaxy Book.

Bromfield, Louis. *The Farm*: New American Library Signet Classic.

Charlton, H. B. *Shakespearean Tragedy*: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Chase, Richard. *Walt Whitman*: Univ. of Minn. Pamphlets on American Writers.

Clark, Walter Van Tilburg. *The Watchful Gods and Other Stories*: New American Library Signet.

Daiches, David. *Virginia Woolf*: New Directions.

Downer, Alan S. *Recent American Drama*: Univ. of Minn. Pamphlets on American Writers.

Drew, Elizabeth. T. S. Eliot: *The Design of His Poetry*: Scribner's.

Esslin, Martin. Brecht: *The Man and His Work*: Doubleday Anchor.

Evergreen Review Vol. IV, No. 17: Grove Evergreen.

Fairley, Barker. *A Study of Goethe*: Oxford Paperback.

Faulkner, William. *Sanctuary and Requiem for a Nun*: New American Library Signet.

Gheon, Henry. *The Art of the Theatre*: Hill and Wang.

Gross, Fannie. *The Shakespearean Review Book*: Apollo Edition.

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"HOWL" IN THE CLASSROOM

The inclusion of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" in a recent anthology of American poetry meant for college use¹ seems to raise the question of how such a poem can be taught before the prior question of why it should be taught has been answered. But perhaps the fact that "Howl" is generally regarded as the most symptomatic poem of current romantic protest is justification enough for bringing it into the classroom, especially if symptomatic Puritan verse is also being used or symptomatic Transcendental verse.

The use of current symptomatic poetry can be perilous, of course, as last year's furor at State University College on Long Island demonstrated. There, an instructor (at the instigation of his students) assigned Poem #5 from Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Coney Island of the Mind*. Before long Representative Steven Derounian (at the instigation of an aunt of a friend of a girl in the class) called for an investigation. The poem, which protests mankind's continuing crucifixion of Christ, struck Rep. Derounian as "cheap, tawdry, insolent and blasphemous." In vain did students, teacher, the poet, and even the Catholic magazine *Commonweal* point out the essential religiosity of the poem (not to mention the issue of academic freedom). Rep. Derounian could not get over the use of words like "dad" and "square" in a poem about Christ—especially at the Easter season. "If there is a concentrated and planned effort to destroy Christian beliefs under the guise of education," he said darkly, "we should know it so immediate corrective action can be taken." The possibility of having the net of such an "if" thrown over one's head is enough to give any teacher pause.

Nevertheless, since beat poetry continues to attract students and since Ginsberg is now available within the same covers as Longfellow, some teachers may want to take a chance on "Howl." My own experience has been that it has one enormous asset: it communicates excitement; it compels interest; it has an effect on readers, a virtue extremely rare in our youngish poets and totally lacking in the ones who are still Pound-oriented. "I thought I wouldn't write a poem," Ginsberg has said,² "but just write what I wanted to without fear, let my imagination go, open secrecy, and scribble magic lines from my real mind—sum up my life—something I wouldn't be

¹ American Poetry, ed. Karl Shapiro (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960). See also A Casebook on the Beat, ed. Thomas Parkinson, likewise published by Crowell.

² "Notes Written on Finally Recording 'Howl,'" *Evergreen Review*, 3 (November-December 1959), 132-35. All references to Ginsberg's remarks on his own method are from this source.

able to show anybody, writ for my own soul's ear and a few other golden ears." Because it abandons highly-ordered structure and imagery (or the pretense of it) and yields to compulsive private experience, "Howl" gains greatly in raw vitality and reader engagement.

This is not to say, however, that "Howl" is without form and void. Students are likely to take that happy view of it and imagine that if a poem does not have what Eliot's poems are presumed to have—perfect articulation, then it can always have the opposite—perfect chaos. "Howl" cannot and need not be presented as highly organized, but that it has enough structure to make it a poem instead of a heap should be pointed out.

The best authority for doing so is Ginsberg himself. His remark about not setting out to "write a poem" only means that he did not concern himself with form in advance. He had the true romantic faith that "Mind is shapely" and that if "practiced in spontaneity" it "invents form in its own image." His account of the stages of composition of "Howl" is worth noticing. Part I was "typed out madly in one afternoon" and, according to a later statement, never revised. Part II was written "nearly intact" in a cafeteria; the italics are mine, because Part II underwent some revision. Part III was "conceived and half-written" on the same afternoon as Part I, but the poet "went back later and filled it out."

What these remarks suggest is a not unusual method of composition. After an unspecified amount of preparation in the mind, there was a strong spurt of inspiration which brought the total poem into view. Then came two less powerful spurts which had to be worked on (their order was even reversed) in order to fit them into the whole. The result: "Part I, a lament for the Lamb in America with instances of remarkable lamblike youths; Part II names the monster of mental consciousness that preys on the Lamb; Part III a litany of affirmation of the Lamb in its glory . . ."

The half-mocking language of suffering may be distracting here, but the description of related parts adding up to a whole is accurate. Part I, after its stark opening, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness," develops a lurid catalog of the activities and attitudes of youths not altogether lamblike who are "burning" for some "ancient heavenly connection" in a world that prefers to tame them with "the concrete void of insulin metrasol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong & amne-

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THE CEA CRITIC

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GENERALS PULL K.P.

All of us in CEA are certainly indebted to our old friend Dean Joseph Doyle of the University of Hartford for his stimulating contribution to the panel at the annual meetings in Philadelphia in December. There is one of his incidental points, however, which perhaps needs extended debate: his dream idea of an English department in which the younger men with fresh Ph.D.'s would take over the graduate seminar courses, while the older men would teach English to freshmen.

At least that's what I recall his saying—and perhaps most of us can remember some departments in which that system would have created an improvement. But by and large, the scheme remains in the dream stage because the older men constitute the

vested interests and wouldn't permit it to be put into operation. Practically, the implementation of the idea might be something like letting young men just out of officers' training school take over direction of military tactics and strategy and putting the battle-seasoned generals and colonels on K.P. Again, many of us can think of parts of the army in which this would be an improvement.

But let's consider the matter in another professional category: medicine. Hospitals would hardly be improved if recent graduates of medical schools performed the important operations, while experienced surgeons acted as internes and orderlies. This is perhaps a closer analogy.

Now it is true that Joe Doyle wasn't attacking high-level scholarship: he indicated that men who were engaging in extensive scholarship and writing should be labelled as research professors and encouraged to carry on their work without too much interference. Rather, Dean Doyle was speaking of the usual English department in which a few professors teach a few limited-registration seminars while a great many instructors take on oversize classes in composition. I don't see how this condition can be changed at present.

Granted, many English departments are certainly at their upper levels overstaffed with dodos. Many of them are holdovers from the old days before the publish-or-perish epoch—which, for the strain it puts upon some teachers, might be renamed publish and perish. Now most of us know that publication doesn't necessarily make a good teacher—indeed, it sometimes works the other way around, for some publishing teachers merely dash into a classroom, with obvious boredom and often with mumbling get a required lecture out of their systems, and then retreat to their own cloisters. But this is surely unusual. Most of the men who publish bring a certain authority into the classroom: their ideas have been tested in the public arena. Many of these men are excellent at vocal as well as written expression, and give the student his tuition's worth, if not more.

The point is, of course, that the younger men doing the bottle washing want to get into the exalted position of a full professorship which will allow them more time to research and write. But I don't think the solution is what Joe Doyle seemed to be proposing: a gipsy switch between higher and lower levels.

No, the lower ranks in departments are apprenticeship grades; and most of us have worked our way up through them. The trouble in English is that the apprenticeship is more gruelling than in other subjects because of all the theme papers continually haunting the instructor. Well, he simply has to put up with them—at the lowest level, continual work along these lines, however monotonous, should improve one's own ability to express oneself clearly and forcefully.

The solution, incidentally, is not a sep-

arate communications department, with specialists in literature detached for the purpose of concentrating on the world's masterpieces. It has often been pointed out that if the trend toward separation continues, English departments in the future will become vestigial parts of the colleges, as so many Classics departments regrettably are today. If English departments lose the influence which their present numbers sometimes give them, it will be a black day for the teaching of literature. There is the further liability that the specialist in communications will be doomed to stay in that area forever.

The problem of the younger staff members is best faced when they give themselves to their apparently menial apprentice work with some dedication—researching and writing as best they can, when they can (as some of us in the past had to do). Freshman composition is important, one of the important phases of academic training, as any member of the CEA must certainly be willing to admit; it's too bad there's so much drudgery connected with it, but there it is. Devotion and diligence will bring their rewards in time.

Ideally, the teacher who comes into the classroom should be a triple-threat man. His scholarship should be sound, his ability to project should be high, and his publication record should be good—once again, to enable him to give a truly professional stamp to his work. It's a hard road upward, but those who love literature enough to wait a few years to reap the rewards of teaching it shouldn't be impatient, for to aficionados of the subject there is nothing so wonderful as the teaching of literary masterpieces. Meanwhile, let's not let internes direct battles and surgeons go on K.P.

HARRY T. MOORE

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1961

Regional Exchange: 1960 In Retrospect

The 1960 annual report of the Committee on Regional Activity and Development contains at least five points which should be of general regional interest; brief mention here seems to be the best method of bringing these matters to the attention of the far-flung regional organizations.

PERSONNEL: As part of the recent shifting of organizational responsibilities, Pat Hogan replaced Don Sears as Regional Coordinator and also continued as committee chairman during 1960. (The April, 1959, issue of *The CEA Critic* outlined the functions of the two offices.) The committee itself will probably undergo some reorganization in 1961.

RECORDS: When CEA files at Amherst were being prepared for transfer to the University of South Florida, the new national headquarters of CEA, the major portion of the records and correspondence directly related to regional matters was separated and shipped to the present Regional Coordinator. A central clearing house for regional information is now established. (The address is Box 207, Mississippi State University, State College, Mississippi.)

LINE OF COMMUNICATION: Slowly, but encouragingly, the trend has been for most communications dealing with regional affairs to be directed to the Regional Coordinator. Don Lloyd, John Hicks, and Don Sears have been especially prompt to forward such correspondence.

REGIONAL EXCHANGE: Following the discussions of the 1959 meetings of officers and directors and in response to several direct requests from CEA regionals, coverage of regional meetings and other matters of regional interest has been increased in *The CEA Critic*. Response to the present column has been generally favorable. Suggestions for its improvement are always welcome.

In 1961 three areas of stress are planned for the column. First, an increased exchange of information among regionals will be encouraged. Other regionals will probably find it helpful to follow the examples of the several which initiated the practice of distributing newsletters, copies of programs, and reports of meetings. Second, regional-national ties will be strengthened by emphasizing regional contributions to and support of national CEA aims, purposes, and projects. There will be an intensified articulation of the national's vital interest in regional activities, both major and minor, and in their problems, both large and small.

A third area of stress will be the continued promotion of membership in national CEA by a larger proportion of the membership of each regional. Regionals will be urged to devote a few moments of program time at their seasonal meetings to the national annual membership drive.

NATIONAL-REGIONAL VISITATIONS: Officers and directors are planning to be available in 1961 for visits to regional meetings to which they are invited. It is hoped that at least one officers or director will be able to attend each of the fifteen or twenty regional gatherings now scheduled.

PAT HOGAN

GOODNIGHT

By John Ciardi

An oyster that went to sleep
x-million years ago
Tucked itself into a sand-bottom,
yawned (so to speak),
And woke a mile high
in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

If I am not here for breakfast, geologize at will.

—reprinted by permission of the author
and *Saturday Review*.

GNV CEA SPRING MEETING

The greater New York CEA will hold its spring meeting on March 18 at Adelphi College where EDWARD HUBERMAN is Visiting Professor this year. As program chairman, old-time CEA-er Ed Huberman has built an all-day session around the topic: The Professor's Dilemma — Self Image vs. Public Image. At the morning session, commencing at 10:45, JOSEPH DOYLE, Dean of the University of Hartford, speaks on "The College English Teacher Looks Inside." LOUIS CARLINER, of the Education Division of the United Automobile Workers, follows with a presentation called "As the Public Sees Him." After luncheon a series of panels examine The Square Scholar in a World Full of Curves. Particular panels will be "Tranquillizers for Tenure Tension"; "Parlaying a Professorship into Money, or How to Spell Professor as Operator"; and "The 1975 Teaching Machine." Meetings are open to all.

OUTSTANDING TEXTS

Effective Communication 2nd ed.

by Howard Dean and Kenneth Bryson,
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1961 approx. 576 pp.
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The Poem: A Short Anthology

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Architectural Devices in Composition

Our written communication is often unimpressive and weak because of a lack of variableness and originality in the "architecture" or form of the writing. There is, however, actually, an almost infinite number of combinations of word-forms, sentence structure, and methods of creating certain desired effects.

The writer must first determine his target, purpose, and the size of his project. He realizes that today securing of public attention is highly competitive, and another edition of the old banalities will not get far. He must select a type of architecture and a combination of emphases and effects which will be clear while being different. Language rendered pure but sterile by the application of rule-book devices and grammarian's guidance will not guarantee success.

There is no reason why we should not have new architectural developments in compositional forms to go along with our new tastes in housing, clothing, and many other interests in life. The writer who is really resourceful and in touch with the life of his times will readily discover intriguing variations on old forms and by changing terminology, word-order, and the sequence in which his material is brought forward, he may be able to achieve notable effects.

Assuming that the writer really has something to say and the will to write it, there are certain devices or methods which he may use.

The first is a simple, direct presentation of (for example) four points of equal value. The writer develops each one in turn, thus completing a synthesis. These are presumably the four chief subdivisions of the topic, treatment of which makes a unit of the production as a whole. I suggest four because usually a topic of any size requires that number. To develop more in a simple theme or presentation is usually more than the reader of a short communication will accept or can retain. This is of course not true in more ambitious treatises, brochures, dissertations, books.

The second is a variation of this method. It features four points which alternate a very important point with a point of lesser importance. This gives some flexibility, color, and variety to a piece of writing.

The third is another variation: four points are developed in an ascending order of importance. Each is more important than the previous one, thus building up a crescendo-like effect. Often this device may be discerned in political or theological polemics.

The fourth type may be called the pyramidal. It starts from a broad base and by processes of elimination and development builds to a narrowed point. Arguments which start from generalizations and work to particulars in a deductive manner are illustrations of this type.

The fifth type is known to various disciplines and walks of life—it is the circuitous. Sometimes the religionist or the salesman finds it expedient to "beat around the bush," to deal with irrelevant or subsidiary or tangential matters until he has established certain facts or ideas or impressions. Then he changes course and veers around to the real point which motivates his writing. Where one starts with hearers or readers known to be hostile or indifferent or difficult for some other reason, this method may have its real attractions.

The argumentative type of writing may simply involve dealing with facts, issues or points that have been raised and dealing with them seriatim, stressing the point to which the reader is directed.

The expository type is usually that which takes one or more points and supplies extended background, explanations, and supplementary material intended to describe the nature, functions, and value of the matter at hand.

The hortatory style stresses a largely emotional outcome and the acceptance of an attitude or feeling or allegiance. It is a personal appeal based not so much on facts and argument as on some emotional response which the writer recommends.

The philosophical type is obviously one in which the writing is reflective, slower in motion, broader in its objectives, seeking largely to lay before the reader facts, values, and powers for his own reflection and possible action. It is often in the form of a commentary upon some action, statement, or factual presentation.

The "bulldozer" type is a composite type in which are used all available elements to build up a battering-ram effect to push over something which the writer advocates.

The "airplane" type describes the kind of writing which may or may not be "up in the air." It seeks to proceed at once to a point removed in one way or another from the position the reader now has to some distant situation or conclusion—and it usually flies over rapidly any territory lying in between. This might also be called the arrow type, which shoots out a shaft directly to a target, paying little heed to anything lying between it and the target.

The narrative type is based largely on some more topical and experimental type possibly including conversation, some description, and detailing of action and events. It may be of an historical or a fictional nature.

The elimination type uses a method of dealing in succession with point after point which is to be rejected, leaving only the one or ones to be accepted.

This is by no means an inclusive or even an entirely accepted list, but does indicate, I think, devices which have been used by some writers, to real effect. This effect, of course, depends upon their own mind and personality, the industry and intellectual resources and experience with

which they write, and use of vocabulary, subject matter, allusions, and the like calculated to be understood by their readers.

Stuart Chase, in his intensely stimulating volume, *Guides to Straight Thinking* (Harper's), has offered a number of ideas of relevance to any writer seeking more effective methods and structures for his presentations. There is, of course, the "ad hominem" approach, trying to reach a conclusion by name-calling or abusive or strong-arm tactics. This is like the "tu quoque" (or "you're another!") form, which is not argumentative or informative, but seeks by epithets, condemnations, accusations, and the like to bring about a desired result. Chase also cites the use of the "ad verecundiam," or appeal to authority type of thinking. Much political and religious, and indeed some scientific, writing is of this basic type. We are all familiar, too, with the resort to the heaping up of statistics and the use of a formidable mass array of materials, quotations, allusions, and illustrations. A beguiling type of persuasion lies in using false or unsuitable analogies, illustrations, or examples. Repetition may also be used to impress the reader through having him see something so often that he finally tends to accept it.

Most speakers and writers are also rather familiar with the appeal to the ego, striving to enthrone the reader in some highly desired role or situation. There may likewise be an appeal to the individual's social, economic or vocational interests. Argument by association of ideas may be accompanied by arguing in a circle, "circulus in probando."

Much writing too takes refuge in revelation or some other unverifiable source materials. It may also include reference to what "everyone knows" or "they say," an appeal to the unidentified masses.

The point is that the structure is very important in securing the desired effect in writing. In many instances ineffective writing in freshmen courses is due to unorganized or disorganized thinking and faulty assembling of material. There is no proper order or sequence or internal structure which can carry effectively the message desired.

It appears to me that we need to spend much more time on methods and frameworks, giving students opportunity to practice various methods and to become familiar with their most effective uses.

A piece of writing cannot well proceed like a worm coming out of an earthy hole into a damp surface area. To change the figure, it cannot properly fulfill its purpose if it is like any stretchable material being pulled out and farther out to suit the whim of the writer.

If certain basic techniques become known to students through classroom experience and practice, college compositions are likely to improve in quality.

RICHARD K. MORTON
Jacksonville University

Letters To the Editor

Sir:

For some years I have read Donald Lloyd's comments as they were published in *The CEA Critic*, and I found them constructive, temperate and considerate. Seldom, however, have I been stimulated to write as I have felt the ingrained attitudes of the academic world to be invincible. But, Mr. Lloyd's piece in the December *Critic* prompted what follows.

One of the basic problems—and I sincerely mean basic—is that the English instructor, whatever his status within his group, is to teach and, in teaching, to sell. We may prefer selling Cadillacs but, as Ford salesmen, we have to sell Fords. Once the Director of Admissions and his faculty advisory group have accepted a student, it is our function to help that student develop to his fullest capacity whatever it may be. Chronologically, the student comes into the classroom at a disadvantage. He has had neither the years to read nor the interest in the literature that has consumed so much of our time. And yet, we become disgusted when we find that he has never heard of Howells, Galsworthy, Dreiser, Capote and Robert Lowell. And as for Corso and Ginsberg—they must be haberdashers.

May it not be well, once in a while, for us to recall the instructor of other years who stimulated us to an interest in our language and its literature. Certainly we haven't always been the scholars we now think ourselves to be. As fuzz-faced individuals, we must have presented rather sorry figures to our professors. But now, for some reason, we expect our students to evidence the writing techniques worthy of skilled professionals.

As I read, too often, the bewailings of the English instructor about his lot, it occurs that more emphasis on his teaching and less on his sorry position within the academic halls would help upgrade his status. If we are unable to convince our students that we are constantly expressing ourselves in writing and in speech, we are not being effective as teachers. And I am sure you know, surveys have shown that one's economic status is often in direct relationship to one's ability to use the language. And, although this is not the real reason for education, it is fre-

the literature are culturally and economically important to him.

At which point I return to my original premise. College teachers are salesmen. They are not doing much selling of their own wares when they are constantly criticizing secondary educators and their product. We may not like what we are getting from the secondary school, but let's take it and proceed from there. Let's make the silk purse.

HARVEY OLSON
University of Hartford

BUREAU OF APPOINTMENTS

The CEA Bureau of Appointments is maintained at Upsala College as a service to CEA members. The only charge, in addition to national CEA membership, is \$2.00 for a twelve-month registration. Registrants who are not CEA members should include with their registration fee the annual membership fee of \$4.50. Registration does not guarantee placement. Prospective employers are invited to use the service of the CEA Bureau of Appointments at no charge.

quently quite convincing to the student.

For almost twenty years I have been a part-time instructor at the University Evening College of the University of Hartford working with adults who suddenly have developed the urge for knowledge. Perhaps it is in this area of education where the desire to help is strongest. Certainly there is no time here to count the number of lines in Faulkner's longest paragraph. And, this is not meant to be disparaging to the scholar. But what freshman has any interest in scholarly pursuits? He has to be SOLD on the fact that his language and

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Status Levels in an English Department

Mr. Lloyd's description of the "slums of Academe" and of the status seekers who dwell in or rise above them is too horrifyingly accurate to be passed over lightly. However, in the hope that he has not quite mapped all of Academia, let me speak in two voices from a happier land.

As director of a freshman English program and a Ph.D. from a famous Eastern university, currently publishing and perishing at about equal rates, I will presume to speak from some vaguely middle status level. The other voice is that of a graduate teaching assistant in the department, certainly and precisely a man of Mr. Lloyd's lower depths. The uncertain voice is mine. The tortured one is the graduate assistant's. The suggestion for this rejoinder came from him. My part is to add weight (that is, status) to his remarks.

First, is freshman English quite the economic slum Mr. Lloyd describes? Let the voice from the underground speak first:

"No one in Room 207 (the graduate assistants are exactly one floor below and precisely beneath the offices of the regular staff) is getting rich teaching English. Yet, as disturbing as it may seem, teaching at a low salary (which is better than no salary and even slightly more) is not the worst of fates. Being a part of the intellectual community is worth something, even perhaps at the risk of being exploited. Our anguish over our poverty may be magnified in the minds of our superiors, who, knowing our condition of servitude and feeling the pinch of their own small salaries, wonder how we can live on less. Most of us are strongly attracted to college teaching, and the mere fact of being able to earn something at tasks directly related to our aspirations is more heartening than the size of our checks might suggest. Part-time work pays poorly in any community.

"The salary for part-time teaching in the university is probably above the going wage for part-time work of any other kind. More than that, part-time teaching fits into our academic schedule in a way other work would not. We all hope to rise. The hordes of freshmen which now keep us employed in the slums may give us a place in the suburbs in the years ahead. For these reasons and others, teaching freshmen, even for the grayest of the submerged, is not quite the equivalent of prowling the ash cans of society."

My colleague (this is now the voice from on high) leaves me little to say—except, perhaps we won't have to raise the graduate assistant stipends next year. Our graduate assistants do teach most of our freshman English (at the direction of the senior staff, of course), and I'd like to hear the teaching assistants' views about Mr. Lloyd's contention that the teaching of freshman English changes the teacher from the "free creative preceptor," to a "middleman in a mass market." What of that?

"Status-starved wretches that we are, we feel even worse when someone tries to

take from us pride in our work. It hadn't occurred to us before that we were 'middlemen,' living on the fringes of high culture, like the publisher's representatives who haunt the upper hall. After all, we have some merits as freshman teachers which even the older, wiser heads may lack: we're young, we're eager, we're receptive to learning, and we're free. Being young, we may find it easier to deal with freshmen and freshmen to deal with us. Being eager, we can read more themes without losing either our minds or our tempers. Being receptive to learning, we find teaching, even freshmen, exciting and often challenging. And we graduate students are comparatively free. We have fewer children, fewer mortgages, fewer distractions, and, having no status, are not constantly pressed to maintain it."

Permit the rights of status to assert themselves here and let the professor add a comment. Perhaps the one consoling fact among many despairing ones is that if teaching freshmen classes is drudgery, we have the drudges to do it. Better still, to the young apprentice, such work may not appear to be drudgery at all. By the time it becomes so, he has a fair chance of getting away from some of it. The life-long drudge deserves everyone's pity, but there's no good reason why freshman English should either create or sustain such drudges. Employing graduate assistants, giving them responsibilities, and helping them maintain a pride in their work may not eliminate the drudgery but does help reduce it to being a temporary affliction.

Since my underprivileged colleague has no objection, our two voices will blend as one to question Mr. Lloyd's reflections about status levels in English departments.

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Universities vary greatly in the importance placed upon status. There are universities—not English departments alone—in which instructors speak only to instructors and where assistant professors speak scarcely at all. Eventually, such universities become the setting for devastating satirical novels about academic life. In many universities, however, a department need not be simply a victim of a student system imposed from the outside, either from the squat triangular shape of higher education or from the prominence of the graduate school. A department can make its own image, and many departments are working to that end.

The picture given by Mr. Lloyd is only dimly recognizable in our department. In part, we have our university to thank or blame for that. It is a medium-sized state university (10,000 students) and is only now turning away from being principally a collection of undergraduate colleges into a university in which research and graduate scholarship are emphasized. It has yet to experience the extreme conflicts between undergraduate teaching and graduate research which do much to create the status levels Mr. Lloyd describes.

Nevertheless, the department has consciously worked toward the fostering of a reasonable, basically democratic, and doubtless middle-class academic society. Though there are status levels, these levels have not been stressed. Without displaying an unscholarly spirit of universal buddyhood, the department has made an effort to draw the lowliest toiler into the life of the department and to maintain social and academic relationships between members of all ranks. Second or third class citizens within the regular department are the accident and not the rule. The department has worked to make it so. We could have, as have universities similar to ours, adopted a four-year and out program for instructors. By so doing, we would almost certainly have created a bull-pen on the one hand and a baronial estate on the other. We have chosen rather to make our appointments carefully, give them full status and privileges as instructors, and the promise, if not the certainty, of professional advancement to the upper ranks. And though it might have been convenient, we have not encouraged perpetual instructors—of freshman English or anything else. Our graduate students are not uniformly scintillating, but we do keep them moving along, or, when the necessity arises, moving out.

Finally, we have had few cliques, little intense rivalry, scant back-biting, some wisdom, and a large measure of democracy. If this seems like a parading of virtues, albeit humble ones, the point is not vulgar display. Rather, it is to suggest that departments, like individuals, can have virtues, can exercise them, can create a group image quite at variance with that which the status makers would assign them.

KENNETH E. EBLE
JEROME GARGER
University of Utah

Morality at the MLA

According to the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Henri M. Peyre, the out-going president of the Modern Language Association, called the job bargaining done at the December convention "venal" and "sordid." I heard him say so myself. He also said that we should better be spending our time in exchange of ideas. In addition to his remarks about the job bargaining, M. Peyre said a great many other things which proved his ideas were worth stating. And his infectious enjoyment of expression in the English language spruced up the meeting considerably, even as he scolded the scholars to improve the quality and the entertainment value of their papers. But, central, I think, to his remarks was a plea for vitality and conviction in the teaching profession. Now I seldom hear the words "conviction" and "reform" without a shudder. Yet they had meaning. Nor was M. Peyre's enthusiasm and vitality unwelcome to his audience. The applause was long and loud.

To me, the happiest thing about the job bargaining at the MLA this year was that it was done at an isolated hotel. One did not need to go near it unless he was looking for a job or looking for teachers. There are several things, however, that can be said in favor of the morality of the MLA job interview center. It allows personal interviews for teachers who might not otherwise get to be where they most want to be and where their talents can be used most effectively. I venture to say that almost any teacher interested in changing his job can do so, providing he can pay his way to the convention. The immorality is undeniable when the teacher accepts money from his present employer in order to bargain for a new job. It is done, however. It is done because, as a traffic cop once said to me, "Lady, I can't help it. I have a wife and children at home."

But in response to M. Peyre's plea for the exchange of ideas, I do have a few things to say. Teachers attend the MLA, listen to papers that interest them, seldom take notes mentally or otherwise, and return to their faculties where nobody wants to hear about a convention they didn't go to anyway. Nothing more happens. The next faculty meeting considers a redistribution of desks and wastebaskets and other local matters while those who attended the MLA describe in dark corners what some of the big names looked like alive. Do you know he is a quite jolly old elf; I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself. But, what did he say?

One group that interested me was concerned with literature and psychology. Two papers were read. The first, about dreams in the novels of a Spanish novelist, was a stimulating demonstration that Mr. Joseph Schraibman knew a great deal about Benito Perez Galdos' novels. Evidently many persons in the audience also knew these novels because the discussion, led by Louis Fraiberg, was lively. The second

paper, read in the absence of the author, was "The Hocus-Pocus of Lolita" by Elizabeth Phillips and proved to be the most delightfully written paper I heard at the convention. She saw *Lolita* as a satire on the popular American myth about Edgar Allan Poe. She concluded, "The author of *Lolita* has conjured up a Poe one can believe guilty of brushing dried blood from a purple silk dressing gown, changing into a Boy Scout uniform, and quipping that Nabokov is a man after his own art." In the discussion period, more than several distinguished literary gentlemen protested passionately that Miss Phillips had not caught the essence of *Lolita* entire. Since Miss Phillips was not present, I began to wonder whether she was a real person, or a hocus-pocus on all of us. (An evil thought, indeed.) But, what fun!

In the prose fiction section of comparative literature, I heard Mark Schorer of Berkeley. He read the last chapter of a biography of Sinclair Lewis that he just finished writing. It was about the death of Lewis and contained an evaluation of the life and the writings of Lewis. The dramatization in Mr. Schorer's prose allowed him to assign motives to Lewis's mourners which might be questioned. That is, Lewis's brother might have had no avaricious intent in removing the urn of ashes from the ground at the burial to have it placed in the library.

A number of papers read in various groups were concerned with trends in current writing. Heroes, for instance, aren't what they used to be. Ihab Hassan of Wesleyan saw the hero of post-war American fiction as a rebel-victim. This hero has ten faces. Here they are: 1. the child, symbol of truth or innocence; 2. the adolescent, showing pain of growth and loss of innocence; 3. the lover, with adultery as the

focus of the action, and the homosexual; 4. the Negro, in search of identity as in *The Invisible Man*; 5. the Jew of the metropolitan East; 6. the grotesque, as in McCullers' *Miss Amelia*; 7. the hapless soldier as in *From Here to Eternity*, 8. (I missed this one, but it is evidenced in *Let it Come Down*.) 9. the comic wanderer; and 10. (last but not least) the hipster, out for kicks, man! In case anyone reacts to the dreary expressions on these faces and longs for gentleness or royalty or divinity or high morals in his heroes, let him write a book. And hurry! *Huckleberry Finn* was given most of the credit for the faces of our current fictional hero. William Faulkner was not mentioned.

Further, in this context of current fiction, I noticed that the latest fashion in transitional phrases is "Unlike Jane Austen —." Mr. Roger Shattuck of Texas compared Camus' *The Stranger* with Melville's *Billy Budd*. He showed that the two novels turn upon the same situation and that both lead to murder. In both, the hero neither defends himself nor shows remorse. Both heroes are inarticulate, especially where a question requires a choice. "Unlike Jane Austen —." Mr. Benjamin Sankey, Jr., of the University of California at Santa Barbara gave a truly illuminating discussion on the techniques of making the mental life of characters convincing. He demonstrated that by the nature of the language in novels such as *Pride and Prejudice*, fixed values can lead to decisive conclusions. Because of the nature of the language of private feelings, however, as in *Madame Bovary*, the procession of the dramatic structure of the plot is slowed down if not halted altogether. Again, "Unlike Jane Austen —."

Something might be said about the morality of the fact of poor attendance at the Thursday morning meetings. The publishers' parties are grand places to meet, if you are fortunate as I was, your former teacher of sophomore English and other good people. But, after these parties are closed, parties continue elsewhere—often until meeting time the next morning, so that only the hardest heroes can function on Thursday morning. Most of the heroes were not present, however; but many hardy heroines were there, looking as spruce as ever. But, as a speaker on Goethe and 19th century song remarked, songs were often composed and certainly performed in the geniality of the late hour. I think that is what he said—when he said it, it was very early on Thursday morning!

Hence, it was not only soothing but a delightful respite from consideration of the problems of current fiction, to hear Mr. Hugh Richmond of Berkeley read a paper on rustic verse. I missed Robert Frost among the selections. However, Virgil, Marvell, Ronsard, Milton, and Wordsworth formed a glorious configuration.

And so in answer to M. Peyre I can say that I got something from the exchange of ideas in papers and comments. Much

(Please turn to page 11)

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TEACHING "HOWL"

(Continued from page 1)

sia . . ." Part II uses Moloch, the deity of human sacrifice, as the symbol of all that "preys on the lambs." The emphasis in this section shifts from effects to causes, from tormented to the tormentor:

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen! . . .

Part III is addressed to a single "lamb." Here the "best mind" — a friend in an asylum—as well as the destroying "madness"—catatonia, or complete withdrawal—become specific. Moloch has done its worst: "fifty more shocks will never return your soul to its body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in the void." The poem seems to end in a stalemate, yet Part III is, however ironically, a "litany of affirmation" simply because of the poet's vivid sympathy. The tune that is being "banged out" on the "catatonic piano" is that "the soul is innocent and immortal it should never die ungodly in an armed madhouse."

It would be the height of academic perversity to ignore Ginsberg's heavy scoring of "ghostly Academies in Limbo screeching about Form." Exaggerating the structural unity of a poem in order to certify it for the classroom has been too common a practice. Yet there is no need to fall into the opposite exaggeration. The success of "Howl" amid so many failures which have imitated its manner is certainly partly due to the fact that the mind behind it was "shapely" enough not to be overwhelmed by the romantic need to let go.

The basic romanticism of "Howl" also accounts for two of its other problems: its uninhibited use of obscene and violent

language, and the lack of focus in its criticism and aims.

When "Howl" was seized by the San Francisco police in 1957 and made the first test of a new California obscenity law, Mark Schorer of the University of California, among others, testified that the "language of vulgarity" was used "necessarily," while Judge Clayton Horn, after a two-weeks' study of court decisions on *Ulysses*, decided that enforced euphemism was a restriction of freedom of press and speech and would be especially injurious to writers who are trying to be "real." So "Howl" was defended and cleared, as far as mail and bookstore distribution were concerned, on both esthetic and civil grounds. Successive printings eliminated more bowdlerizing dots until by the eighth printing every word was given in unblushing full. (*American Poetry* reprints an early version in which dots were used inconsistently.)

Court clearance, of course, does not necessarily make a work suitable for the classroom, either morally or esthetically. If a moral problem exists in "Howl," it obviously does not spring from sexual and scatological slang only but also from the celebration of taking drugs, distributing subversive leaflets, "loning" around the country, and otherwise demonstrating against accepted conduct. But that problem belongs to the poem's social aims, which I shall come to in a moment. The present question is the esthetic one.

I will not attempt to say whether the language of "Howl" on its vulgar and violent side is used successfully, much less "necessarily." Even if it were, a teacher might not want to cope with it. I should only like to point out the esthetic purpose it is meant to subserve. In the mid-twentieth century, high romantic melancholy does not take its tone from the aristocrat on the summit of Jungfrau but from the intellectual in the psychological abyss. This new Manfred uses the language of the gutter as indifferently as he uses the language of the university or of religion. In his hands it no longer has its familiar, realistic uses. It does not show the bad to the good, the poor to the rich, the lowbrow to the highbrow. It has no economic or environmental ties at all. Its warrant is psychological; it simply shows the sufferer to the satisfied. Anyone who undertakes to defend the four letter words in "Howl" must be willing to defend them as evidence of awareness, not ignorance, of sensitivity, not coarseness. He must be able to imagine lambs who do not go to slaughter peacefully, who have to be "dragged off . . . waving genitals and manuscripts"—but who are lambs just the same. In short, he must show that the obscenity and violence of "Howl" serve exactly the purpose they would not serve in genuine realism—shock through incongruity. This job strikes me as being harder than it seems, when so many students are willing and eager to accept violence and obscenity, in word and deed, as congruous elements of modern life. Current realism

has injured them—and their teachers—to what current romanticism "shuddering mouth-wracked and battered bleak of brain" cannot stop treating as extraordinary.

Finally, there is the matter of the vagueness of "Howl's" cause. The very vehemence of its revolt leads one to look for the premises upon which the revolt is based and the solution that is offered. The potshots at materialism, poverty and war give the poem a superficial resemblance to proletarian verse of the Thirties, just as the senseless situations in which the rebels involve themselves suggest that the cause of an existentialist Absurd is being urged. But neither a proletarian nor an existentialist cause is really at work in "Howl." Ginsberg himself has disclaimed the former: ". . . My poetry is Angelical ravings, and has nothing to do with dull materialistic vagaries about who should shoot who. The secrets of individual imagination are of no use to this world, except perhaps to make it shut its trap. . ." Such gestures as distributing "Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square" (not to mention "investigating the F.B.I. in beards and shorts") are touched with an irony that mocks both the gestures and the society that is fearful enough to take them seriously. On the other hand, though his heroes may throw potato salad at CCNY lecturers or present themselves at the madhouse "with shaven heads and harlequin speech of suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy," Ginsberg does not seem to posit an Absurd of which these gestures are the outer sign.

Quite the contrary. However the angels of "Howl" may act, wherever they may look for kicks—in Zen or sex, drugs or jazz—they are clearly motivated by a belief that sympathy, freedom and love exist, must

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be recognized, and are the way out:

... the hospital illuminates itself
imaginary walls collapse O
skinny legions run outside O
starry-spangled shock of mercy the
eternal war is here O victory forget
your underwear we're free

This is romanticism at its most unequivocal. If the premise and aim are vague, they are vague only as romantic aims and premises always are. Ginsberg's lambs wish to be understood, not cured. Psychiatry, whose jargon lends a note of Gothic terror to the poem, is representative of the attack on the individual—an attack meant to subdue, not release him. Society, acting on pessimistic premises, threatens to become a hospital. "Howl's" rebels, acting on optimistic premises, accuse the doctors of insanity and affect madness as a protest. They refuse to "earn" love, freedom and sympathy. They refuse to distrust: "the soul is innocent and immortal"—it needs the "shock of mercy," not insulin.

There is a temptation to use the word "adolescent" as the final description of "Howl." The self-conscious suffering, the refusal to admit that love and freedom have contingencies, the bravura obscenity, could all be brought in evidence. Still, the kind of generosity in adolescence that yearns to make "imaginary walls collapse" has a value too. The adolescent and the romantic have always tended to fade into each other. "Howl" is marred by excesses, but in the midst of so much current intellectual verse—to which one would introduce students only if one wanted them to stop reading current verse altogether—it has its virtues and its uses.

ROBERT HENSON
Hofstra College

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A Literary Guide To Academic Advancement

Most readers of the *AAUP Bulletin* probably regard that eminent journal as hostile to administration. Almost every issue contains sordid accounts of college presidents and deans who have gone astray and have brought down upon their heads the censure of Committee A. While professors on tenure chuckle with delight over statements beginning, "Since there has been a change in administration, the committee has considered removing censure-ship," those of us who still cling tenaciously to our unenviable positions remember the halcyon days of our own professorships and ask, "Who next will drop and disappear?"

In spite of this apparent hostility, administrators ought to regard the *AAUP Bulletin* as a guidebook showing the many pitfalls surrounding the position of administrator. And by a strange oversight this valuable service is rendered by *AAUP* at a reduced rate—associate members, those who have moved "up" to administrative positions, pay only \$4.00, while important members of the academic community are soaked twice that amount. Therefore, it seems fitting that one administrator should compensate by offering some sound advice to the young instructor who, like Hamlet, lacks advancement.

As an administrator I have, of course, no ideas of my own; so I can only present the gleanings of a lifetime of desultory reading. Starting with the base, economic approach to security, let me pass along some advice contained in *The Hickory Stick* which, in spite of its nineteenth century title, is actually a modern treatise on Education disguised as a novel. In this book, beginning teachers are advised to seek out those members of the board who deal in real estate, furniture, and groceries and to

become so indebted to them during the probationary period that it will not be expedient—from the point of view of these hard-headed men—to consider dismissal. Admittedly this ploy works more easily in the public schools; but a shrewd college instructor can turn it to his advantage if he discovers a local member of the board of trustees with whom to do business.

But for those instructors whose academic training has not prepared them for sharp dealing on Main Street, let me move on. To the bright young graduate student who has received his first appointment at one of the many undistinguished institutions of higher learning in America,¹ the discrepancy between his own great abilities and those of the senior staff—to say nothing of the administrators²—becomes at once apparent. Moreover, after serving his institution faithfully for two or three months, he becomes aware that it lacks democratic control; that is to say, he is not personally consulted by the president and trustees on every major policy decision.

This is bitter medicine for an idealist who is as curious and argumentative as Pangloss, but all instructors should be reminded of the advice contained in *The Late George Apley*. When Apley was invited to join a famous club in Cambridge, his father warned him not to volunteer any suggestions for at least five years, lest the older members think him forward. If this seems a bit stuffy, especially to those scholars who are not convinced that twentieth century America has as yet produced anything of real literary merit, let me cite a grimmer warning from eighteenth century France: "I have never known the name of any mufti or of any vizier. I am entirely ignorant of the occurrence you mention; I presume that in general those who meddle with public affairs sometimes perish miserably and that they deserve it; but I never inquire what is going on in Constantinople; I content myself with sending there for sale the produce of the garden I cultivate."³

But the best advice can be found not in prose but on the viewless wings of poesy. I therefore append a final moral which illustrates not the fate of those who itch to interfere with matters which they do not understand, but the rewards awaiting those who recognize early in their careers that lowliness is young ambition's ladder:

I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.

I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Nave!

CHARLES NORTON COE
Northern Illinois University

¹ Robert Penn Warren describes these colleges as short on funds and long on Jesus. This flip remark is out of keeping with the tone of my monograph; so I have buried it in a footnote.

² A recent contributor to *College English* defines an administrator as one who couldn't publish, but wouldn't perish. This isn't bad; but I think Johnson did better. Isn't there something in Boswell about administration (or was it patriotism?) being the last refuge of a scoundrel?

³ Any gentle reader who requires a footnote to identify this passage is undeserving of full faculty status and should be kicked upstairs to an administrative post and the *AAUP's* reduced rate.

NOTICES OF NOTE

Just off the press is *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, a report on the status of the profession, prepared and published by the National Council of Teachers of English with the editorial advice of other societies including The College English Association. The report highlights some seven major deficiencies in the English teaching profession today and sets forth concrete proposals to correct them. Copies may be ordered from the NCTE, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois, at \$1.95 (or at \$1.65 to NCTE members).

Professor Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey, of Bryn Mawr College, is the winner of a \$200 award for writing the best book of *explication de texte* published in 1959. The contest was sponsored by *THE EXPLICATOR*, a literary monthly edited at the University of South Carolina. The winning book, *PARADISE LOST AS "MYTH,"* published by the Harvard University Press, was chosen as the best in literary analysis in the field of English and American literature. The judges were CEA member Elizabeth Nitchie of Goucher, Charles C. Walcutt of Queens, and William Wimsatt of Yale.

Authors and publishers are invited to submit books published in 1960 for consideration in the sixth annual competition. Books should be sent before April 1, 1961, to *THE EXPLICATOR*, Box 10, University of South Carolina, Columbia 1, S. C.

The Houghton Mifflin-Esquire Fellowship Award for this year is a real plum of \$7500. Designed to help authors complete literary projects in fiction and non-fiction, the contest will close on April 1, 1961. Those interested should write to Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston 7, Mass.

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GRAMMAR: A NATURAL SCIENCE

In the 1950's grammar became a natural science. Mathematical symbolism replaced diagraming. The substitution frame replaced parsing. Concepts of structure and operation replaced concepts of meaning in analysis. An "empty" stanza of "Jabberwocky" dramatized the idea that the code takes precedence over the vocabulary. Communication theory as laid out by C. E. Shannon and W. W. Weaver provided an incentive to find the mathematics in the language code parallel to the mathematics in telephonic transmission.

In the new view of language the vocabulary, hitherto the great object of study, is of significance primarily in message making. The old view that words make a language is now deemed wrong. A dictionary is not a language; anyone who opens a lexicon of an unknown tongue readily can see that, though he memorize the words, he cannot put them into sentences as natives of that language do. The code is the essential physical body of a language. Hence the grammarian is interested in words and usage only as they reveal the scope of the code.

A positivistic and naturalistic philosophy underlies the new science of grammar. Language is a physical action that has its origin in a human being whose roots are in nature. Just as his body has an organic unity paralleling the organic unit of the universe, so his speech tract (the area from the diaphragm to the mouth and nose openings) has an organic unity in its activity as a producer of language sounds. The relationship between the central nervous system and the speech tract also is organic. Since all organs operate on a

systematically coded basis, the manifestations of the speech tract also must have a parallel or analogous code. The metaphysical basis of the new grammar is that the principles of form, order, harmony, unity, simplicity, and beauty that lie embedded in nature must also exist in every natural manifestation; the discovery of these principles in language, therefore, is the quest of grammarians.

Similarities Between Languages

Possibly the most far-reaching conclusion of the new grammarian is his statement that all languages operate on the same principles and that the similarities between languages are greater than their differences. This opinion arises from the fact that languages are codes produced by identically formed speech tracts in all human beings. Since any system has a limited number of operations, the operations and structures of language must not only be finite in number but also very limited in variety and scope. The speech tract is analogous to a clarinet; all that it does is performed in relationship to a fixed musical gamut. No matter how many different keys and tunes are on the score, the instrument does the same things in the same way.

Language production is a human act and is analyzable as a behavioral science. The nature of stimulus and response can be determined. Brain loss and other injuries and their effect can be measured. The role of habit in mastering and using language can be ascertained. The relationship between ear and eye perception, between auding and reading, and between speech ability and writing ability can be described. Immense progress has been made in psychological investigations of the learning process as related to language.

Analyzing The Code

Literature as the art form built from a language system must also have principles of structure in harmony with those found in language. Although only a few studies of this kind have been made, chiefly by my students and me, new instruments for literary analysis are being provided by the structural approach to language.

The grammarian's primary business, of course, is to analyze the code of a language and not to study human behavior or the fine art in literature. Nor is it his duty to enter into the territory of logic. Yet he can now see that symbolic logicians must bring their methodology and mathematics into harmony with the natural mathematics of language if they are to succeed. Similarly the grammarian can tell the philosophers that their problems lie not in language but in their failure to use the full resources of language structure. Thus the new view of language has a dynamism like the new chemistry of the late eighteenth century; every area of human thought will eventually show the effect of the scientific analysis of speech.

HARVEY E. WARFEL
University of Florida

Letters To The Editor

Sir:

The devotees of the "science" of "communication engineering," (Prof. Warfel's phrase), who write, it must be confessed, extremely well, and who, in addition, have all cut their linguistic teeth on Latin, never honor that language with mention.

As I view the matter, there are especially two powerful, but opposing, reasons for this circumstance. In the first place, any favorable reference to Latin as aid to facility in composition in English or a modern foreign tongue would stamp a person as false to science and a traitor to the gospel of "codes" and "patterns"; and secondly, any explicitly unfavorable conduct toward Latin would close the way of dignified escape back to normality in the event of ultimate failure of "structuralist" propaganda.

And be it said: the time for escape is coming nearer with each passing day. The signs are in the air, a notable one being the querulous tone in recent writings in *The CEA Critic* of one of the more militant leaders of the New Linguists.

A. M. WITHERS
Concord College

MORALITY AT THE MLA

(Continued from page 7)

of what happens at literary conferences can be shared with one's colleagues and students. Students might even be interested in eventual participation in national conferences in their own fields. For my concluding moral is this: the quality of scholarship and the vitality of teaching can be furthered, after all, by attending that vast orgy of communication, the annual MLA meeting.

KATHRYN GIBBS GIBBONS
Louisiana State University in New Orleans

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Letters To The Editor

Sir:

Three years ago when I worked at my first full-time teaching job at a small church college in a small town in Pennsylvania, I was in virtual isolation. That is, I couldn't get to Pittsburgh, the nearest city, on weekends because I had Saturday classes until noon, no money for the purpose of travel, and plenty to do preparing for my classes anyway. Besides, I was isolated because I was "green" in the profession I thought I was ready for. The old pros spent more time than I thought appropriate in spoofing ideals I secretly cherished: scholarship, inspiring students to love language and literature, enjoyment of the library. But, my boss was an understanding guy. He used to call me "Ruth, amid the alien corn." In that green and painful year I rummaged through journals, most of the time without success, for articles by other teachers that would help me to know ways to get through those 50-minute performances that kept arriving with such unrelenting regularity.

The CEA Critic was then a much-needed communication for me. I suppose it was not an accident that while I was teaching Chaucer, articles on Chaucer appeared—articles that talked sense. I wondered whether publication of articles was planned in such a way that at the time when many are teaching Chaucer in a survey course they can read about how others are teaching him elsewhere. Also, the amusing little articles that appear from time to time on typical student errors in themes helped to orient me then. I noticed one of these in a recent issue and thought that although student errors sounded old hat to me now, many English teachers in little colleges or in big universities must be chuckling over their problems in remote unison, as it were! I think that there must be many more than a few teachers who in their first year of teaching feel much the same as I did, and I think that your publication certainly serves their needs in an enjoyable and sound manner.

KATHRYN GIBBS GIBBONS
Louisiana State University in New Orleans

CHAP BOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTS

A limited supply of the following Chap Books and supplements to **The CEA Critic** are available to members and will be distributed gratis on a first come, first served basis. Free copies should be ordered by number from the Editor, Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey.

1. SHORT WORDS ARE WORDS OF MIGHT by Gelett Burgess Dec. 1941
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[Reprinted from *PMLA*, LXVII (February 1952)] Apr. 1952
13. CEA SYMPOSIUM (Annual Meeting) Dec. 1954
14. THE FOLKLORE OF LIBERAL EDUCATION by Francis H. Horn
[Reprinted from *AAUP Bulletin* XLI (March 1955)] Mar. 1955

Letters to the Editor

Sir:

Your editorial "Assembly Line Texts" is a wistful whiff of grapeshot. If the textbook editors don't reply to your "dehumanization" charge, I'll eat my hat. (Or, better, let's make them eat yours.) Good on ya, Yank.

But why has "team" become a dirty word? Would Woolley have been better without Scott back in the 1920's? Or Stephens, without Beck and Snow in the 1930's? Is Perrin or Hodges *ipso facto* less suspect than team-mates Gorrell and Laird? (Neither of those two loners is alone any longer, I notice.) And that mammoth dating back to the Dipsy Doodle which had to be disinterred this year so that the largest writing program in the country could use it was the work of another Unholy Three.

There wasn't much wrong with my own first textbook that collaboration wouldn't have cured. And doubtless my editor would have his own confession to make. (He wasn't checked out for twin-engine craft, either.)

EDWARD STONE
Ohio University

NOTICES OF NOTE

Freshman English was again in the headlines when Douglas Bush of Harvard spoke to the Association of American Colleges in Denver last month. Professor Bush's charge was the now familiar one that the majority of students who enter colleges have read little literature, know nearly nothing about the classics, and are unable to write a page of good English. They are little better, he fears, when they receive their bachelor's degree four years later.

At the same meeting of the AAC, Dr. Earl McGrath urged colleges to limit the number of courses offered, for he feels that present proliferation has expanded into programs that lack unity and coherence. "The proper education of American youth," he asserted, "dictates the meaningful reassembly of the present disparate elements in the liberal arts curriculum."

THE CEA CRITIC

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